

The Food Security Network of Newfoundland and Labrador – a brief history

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Board Member, 1998 – 2007



Overview

- Formation of the network
- Activities/projects
- Funding
- National links
- Current membership

The Beginning - October 1997

- Idea of forming a food security network proposed by the Dietitians of Canada Local Action Group in response to growing concern about hunger in our province
- Press release issued on World Food Day inviting interested people to attend a meeting
- 28 people attended
- Meeting included a panel discussion to set the local context
- Steering committee formed to do the preliminary work on formation of a network

Steering Committee -1997-98

- Steering committee debated the merits of naming the work as anti-hunger vs. food security and recommended that focus be on the broader issue of food security
- Identified the need for funding to support the work of the Network
- Agreed on a provincial focus since most of the issues identified were provincial in scope
- Prepared draft constitution

Founding Meeting - April 2, 1998

- Meeting began with a summary of interviews conducted with local people experiencing food insecurity (work supported by the Dietitians of Canada Local Action Group and the School Children's Food Foundation)
- Draft constitution presented and approved with a number of amendments
- Definition of food security from the World Food Summit in Rome 1996 adopted
- Initial mission statement - "To advocate for food security as a basic human right"

Incorporation/ Revised Mission Statement

- Incorporated as Food Security Network of Newfoundland and Labrador, Inc., Sept. '99
- Mission statement revised at a planning session in Oct. '99 to current statement....

“to actively promote comprehensive community-based solutions to ensure access to adequate and healthy food for all”

Advocacy

- Advocacy Committee established
- Presented brief to Health & Community Services - St. John's Region and sent a copy to the other Health & Community Services boards
- Presented to Premier's Council on Social Development
- Presented brief at the stakeholder consultation on the draft provincial food and nutrition policy

Advocacy (cont'd)

- Presented to a sub-committee of the SSP Northeast Avalon. Followed up re. food security indicators for the social audit
- Sent letters/arranged meetings with several government ministers and the mayor of St. John's about the International Code of Conduct on the Human Right to Adequate Food
- Wrote to the Minister of Health & Community Services to request release of the food costing results

Advocacy (cont'd)

- Had discussions with the *Coasts under Stress* project to advocate for nutrition/food security research
- *Cost of Eating in Newfoundland and Labrador 2003: A Discussion Paper*, was prepared by the Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Social Workers, Dietitians of Newfoundland and Labrador and the Newfoundland and Labrador Public Health Association at the suggestion of the FSN board (all are member organizations of FSN). Participated in the media release of the paper and follow-up interviews

Consultations

- Participated in a Provincial Health Forum
- Provided input to Social Assistance Legislation Review. Representatives attended several consultations and the Peoples' Forum organized by Community Alliance for Better Solutions
- Participated in a Voluntary Sector Initiative workshop
- Met with Coordinator of SSP- Northeast Avalon to discuss food security issues
- Participated in a federal budget consultation and in several provincial budget consultations

Funding

- Applied to HRDC for Local Labour Market Partnership and Job Creation Partnership projects
- Received JCP funding (one year) for:
 - Development Coordinator – Joanne Cag (Nov.'99)
 - Coordinator – Stephen Byrne (Aug.'03)
 - development of a food security resource centre
 - joint project with UCFAC
 - identifying sources of funding
 - coordinate work on news magazine

Funding (cont'd)

- PLURA - phone/internet services and computer lease for 6 months ('00)
- Health & Community Services - St. John's Region Community Investment Fund - development of an electronic newsmagazine on food security ('00)
- Community Animation Program – support for Development Coordinator and an FSN member to attend a Community Food Security Assessment Workshop in Toronto and visit the Field to Table warehouse to view the Good Food Box program ('00)

Funding (cont'd)

- Maple Leafs Foundation - computer equipment and resources for the Resource Room ('04)
- City of St. John's - support for UCFAC community garden ('04)
- PLURA (now known as KAIROS Anti-Poverty Fund) – “We’re Glad You Asked” project ('04)
- HRSDC – Summer students every year since '00
- Farm Credit Canada – display panel ('06)
- Population Health Fund, Public Health Agency of Canada, Atlantic Region – Food Security: It's Everybody's Business ('05 –'08)
- Provincial Wellness Grant ('06 – '07)

Proposed Projects

- Partnered with researchers at MUN on a Community University Research Alliance (CURA) proposal related to food security (1999). Proposal was not successful
- Good Food Box Project (2001). A considerable amount of work went into planning this project. Support was gathered from a variety of sources. Unfortunately the project wasn't able to proceed, primarily due to lack of support for coordinator positions.

Partnership

- Partnership formed with United Church Food Aid Centre in 2003 (now Bridges to Hope)
 - FSN volunteers to help UCFAC with the community garden as an example of a community-based solution
 - FSN to have a small office (& later a resource centre) in the Food Aid Centre in Cochrane Street United Church

Other In-Kind Support

- Office space for the coordinator provided by the Avalon East School Board ('00)
- Planning sessions for board facilitated by Bobbi Boland ('01) and Mike Wadden/Glendora Boland '04)
- Meeting space provided by Health & Community Services – St. John's Region, MacMorran Community Centre, Bridges to Hope, Newfoundland & Labrador Association of Social Workers
- Photocopying – HCSSJR, NLASW, City of St. John's
- Mailing – HCSSJR

Public Awareness/Education

- *Focus on Food Security: Finding Solutions to Hunger in Newfoundland and Labrador, May '99*
 - One day conference held at the HSC
 - Co-sponsored by the Division of Community Health, Faculty of Medicine
 - Over 60 people participated
 - Debbie Fields, Metro Toronto FoodShare, spoke about the Good Food Box Program.
- Workshop session on food security at the NLPHA conference in Corner Brook

Public Awareness (cont'd)

- Development Coordinator participated in public events/committees:
 - Human Rights Fair
 - National Child Day event
 - Landscape 2000 – community gardens/potential interest in a Good Food Box (GFB) project
 - Global Awareness Day – Holy Trinity High
 - Educational Alliance against Poverty
- Board members & summer students participated in similar events over the years as they were able

Public Awareness (cont'd)

- Public information session at the United Church Food Aid Centre with guests from Metro Toronto FoodShare. Focus on urban agriculture and the African Food Basket
- Participated in panel discussions on food security at the provincial Dietitians of Canada conference in Grand Falls and the national DC conference in Saint John, NB in 2002

Newsmagazine

- Started by Development Coordinator (2000)
- Volunteer editorial committee for newsmagazine formed through OXFAM (2001 - 2003)
- Format revised
- Continued since with help of volunteers, board members and staff
- In-kind support (formatting and uploading) provided by the MUN Division of Community Health, Faculty of Medicine ('04 – '05)
- Website currently being redesigned
- Newsmagazine committee to be formed

Community Events

- Partnered with USC Canada on a benefit concert at the Arts & Culture Centre in Oct.'99. Received a portion of the revenue from ticket sales. Participated in media breakfast and panel discussion in conjunction with the event
- World Food Day dinner and panel presentation (2003) at MacMorran Community Centre. Panel discussion and guest speaker from Nicaragua, sponsored by OXFAM

Community Events (cont'd)

- World Food Day Community Suppers held in partnership with OXFAM (2004 - 2006)
- Displays at various events eg. Folk Festival
- Street theatre presentation on food insecurity at the Peace Accord by summer students
- Forum on “Why Eating Healthy in Our Province is Out of Reach for Some” held at Cochrane Street Church
- Food security forum held at E.B. Foran Room in conjunction with 2006 AGM

National Food Security Links

- Coordinator and a board member attended a national meeting in Toronto in June '01 “Working Together: Civil Society Input for Food Security in Canada”
- FSN members participated on the Steering Committee for development of a national food security organization
- FSN reps attended a national food security forum in Winnipeg (2004), the founding meeting of Food Secure Canada in Waterloo (2005) and the national Food Security Assembly in Vancouver (2006)

National Food Security Links (cont'd)

- Had a representative on the National Advisory Committee for food security projects led by the Nova Scotia Nutrition Council & Atlantic Health Promotion Research Centre (2002 – 2005)
 - Contributed to an national environmental scan on food security
 - Participated in national consultations in Calgary and Charlottetown
 - Contributed to the development and pilot testing of “Thought About Food?: A Workbook on Food Security and Influencing Policy” (www.foodthoughtful.ca)

Current Membership*

- Individual – 18
- Organizations – 11
 - Sisters of Mercy, Dept. of H & CS, NLASW, Eastern Health, Western Health, Kids Eat Smart, NL School Milk Foundation, The Organic Farm, Organization for Community Action Initiatives, Bridges to Hope

*as of March 1, 2007

Membership Fees

Membership fee:

- initially \$1.00 for individuals/ \$20.00 organizations
- changed in 2004 to \$1.00 - \$20.00 for individuals/
\$30.00 - \$50.00 organizations

Communication with members

- Bi-monthly teleconferences held in early years
- Teleconferencing arranged for most AGM's
- Electronic news magazine
www.foodsecuritynews.com
- Group e-mail list